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[P. 51(A)] Cabecar Bribri

538 773 The "histories" or legends of the Cabécares and Bribri are numerous. By reviewing them we can gather some of their fundamental theology in spite of the influence of Christian missionaries and contacts with non-indigenous cultures. The Indians themselves refer to these stories as histories and do not like the word tale or legend. To them, they are still something sacred and apart and on the whole are known only to the *jawá* or older men. They are recounted to aspirants, and occasionally around the fire during nights of interminable winter rain. It is interesting that histories dealing with subjects such as the soul, the creation of the world, etc., are usually Cabécar by origin although accepted by the Bribri. Secular tales recounting the reason for the appearance or the voice of certain animals are generally Bribri.

776 **Theological Beliefs.** At the root of Talamanca religion, there is one powerful god, *sibu*, who, as Lehmann notes, has at least twenty different names.[100] He is good and is responsible for the good in the world. He is everywhere. When he is with non-Indians he dresses with shoes, etc., but with Indians he does as they do. He speaks all languages and taught people how to do everything.

[773] The role of *sibu* is akin to that of an artist or architect. He thought of man and he made us through *suLá* while he, *sibu*, was thinking 775 of them. The good and bad people all go to *sibu* when they die if their bones have been sung to (*see* Bone Burial). The soul must wait for this, and if they are never sung to, then a snake eats the bones. The souls of Indians and non-Christians go to the world below, nevertheless. This is why *sibu* took everything 772 from beneath the earth to make place for the 776 Indians there. In this underground domain, 753 there are four worlds. One is for sickness; one for the owners (*dueño*) or protectors of animals; one for Indians; one for the evil spirits. Disease is often sent by the spirit owners or protectors of animals or the animals themselves. This is one reason why the medicine [752] man has his own and secret name for them.

771 The Talamanca religion on the whole, how-

776 [100] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.

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776 sky, *kakəLjtə*, and traveled from Talamanca to Boruca naming as he went all the peaks, rivers, and creeks. He passed through Cabécar also on this journey. His name signifies *eternity* because "he has always existed and has never ceased to exist." During this period, the Térrabas were monkeys. Later they were changed to people.

[487] *bukLbru* (Cabécar and Bribri). The trail that leads from Talamanca to Ujarrás crosses a peak at an altitude of 2150 meters, just beyond the division of waters on the Pacific slope. Here, those Indians who make the journey for the first time must leave a small fragment of their clothing on a staff. As they do this they say, "We pay equally not to become ill and not to suffer." Those going from Ujarrás to Talamanca, must do the same at *surstsqku* at an altitude of 1480 meters. This is because *bukLbru* is the lord of the peak and must be appeased so that he will protect the newcomers. Those who have made the trip before, and non-Indians, do not have to do this because "the heat of the initiated will protect them."

[484] [782] [487]

urigaki is an old man who lives in a great pool. He is the guardian of fish.

There are many more lesser spirits. Some of these appear in the myths which follow.

Theological Myths. The number before the title corresponds to the same myth given in the Linguistic section of this book.[1]

(1) The Birth of *sibu*[162] (Version 1)

(*Cabécar*)

* 539 [776] *sibu* is like air. He has no father. In order to come to this world he entered a woman in the form of air. God himself, however, went underground through the four worlds[163] and appeared when the pregnant woman went to the brook. There he was found in the form of a newly born babe. The woman joyously gathered him up and carried him to her house.

The woman had some brothers who were powerful medicine men. They asked her whether the child was hers or whether he was God. The woman answered, "He is my child."

● [772] [163] The four underground worlds of the Cabécares are: for sickness; for the owner of animals; for dead Indians; for evil spirits.

[1] [See category 116, pp 75-95 - Analyst.]